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A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by

Diane M. Cronin

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration and Supervision

Under the Supervision of Dr. Laura Schulte

Omaha, Nebraska

April, 2005

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DISSERTATION TITLE

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BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

BY

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## Abstract

# A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Diane M. Cronin, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2005

Advisor: Dr. Laura Schulte

This was a quantitative study investigating three main questions. The first two questions ascertained teachers' and parents' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator, and the third question compared the perceptions of the two groups.

Teachers and parents from 10 Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon were surveyed. The schools had similar demographics with an enrollment of between 200 and 300 students each representing an average of 163 families and were all located in the metro area. The survey was a self-designed instrument that consisted of several questions in each of the areas: leadership styles, principal as religious leader, principal as instructional leader, administrator, and communicator. Subjects completed the survey by circling answers on a Likert scale from number 5 as highly important to number 1 as not important regarding principal effectiveness.

The results of this study indicate that the teachers and parents are very similar in their perceptions of what behaviors an effective Catholic elementary school principal should exhibit. They agree that leadership skills are most important for principals and that the principal's religious leadership is less important for effectiveness.

According to the means of the groups, the teachers and parents agreed on seven of the behaviors as most important for an effective principal among the individual questions. They also agreed on the six least important behaviors of an effective principal. Being an effective communicator was clearly the leader with both groups.

Although both groups ranked the subscale of principal as religious leader as important, there was a significant difference between them. The parents' mean was lower than the teachers' mean.

While a principal has many duties and responsibilities, the Church makes it clear that the religious leadership of the Catholic school must remain a priority. This study points out that parents and teachers may not understand the importance of this role.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The role of the Catholic school principal has expanded to include many new tasks that principals of earlier generations never even considered (Drahmann & Stenger, 1989). There have been numerous efforts to redefine the list of desirable traits that principals need to improve their preparation and increase their success (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2002). This study examines teachers' and parents' perceptions of the characteristics and behaviors of an effective Catholic elementary school principal. Determining these characteristics may give principals some guidance in where to focus their energies and help search committees ensure a better fit of a principal candidate to their schools.

Many educators, following research reported by Coleman et al. (1966), believed schools could not become any more effective in dealing with disadvantaged students. This belief was further advanced by Jencks' (1972) studies that concluded that family background was the largest predictor of a child's success in school. However, concern for improvement of the educational system in the United States was greatly stimulated in 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence in Education released the report *A Nation at Risk* (1983). This report documented the declines and inadequacies of our educational system and spawned what became known as the Effective Schools Research of the 1980s and 1990s.

Out of this research has come a summary of the factors that make up effective schools. These are (a) strong leadership, (b) a climate of expectation, (c) an orderly but not rigid atmosphere, (d) communication to students of the school's priority on learning the basics, (e) diversion of school energy and resources when necessary to maintain priorities, and (f) a means of monitoring student (and teacher) achievement (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001).

It is the first factor, that of leadership, that is the focus of this study. The other factors are driven by the behaviors of the principal. Many studies have been conducted to try to identify the characteristics of a school principal who is an effective instructional leader (Bagwell, 2002; Brunn, 1996; Davis, B.J., 1995; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hicks, 1991; Pavan & Reid, 1991; Sithole, 1995; Urbain, 1989). Each study, depending on the variables being measured, has defined different attributes. While many overlap in what they have concluded constitutes an effective leader, some have very different characteristics.

Catholic school leaders have the responsibility of being the spiritual leader for their schools. This, coupled with other elements in their job description, complicates their role even further. They need to be continually developing and growing in their own faith in order to model and lead the rest of the school community to ensure that the Catholic identity of the school remains strong. The governance of Catholic schools differs from the public schools in that their school boards are generally advisory only, with the priest of the parish having the final authority in all decisions. There are

generally some parish staff members directing other ministries within the church that the school needs to collaborate with on various events.

### Problem Statement

There are many studies on effective schools and the leadership within those schools. Several were examined for this study (Bagwell, 2002; Barbary, 1999; Couch, 1991; B. J. Davis, 1995; E. L. Davis, 1992; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hicks, 1991; Higgins, 1993; Marschilok, 1993; Mutschler, 1985; Pendola, 1996; Politz, 1991; Sithole, 1995; Stockton, 1997; Urbain, 1989). Oftentimes the teachers are asked what their perceptions of an effective principal are, or a principal will be observed and the behaviors of that person noted. Catholic schools vary in their demographics and needs. Search committees for these schools are charged with the task of finding the principal who will be the best fit for their school (Campbell, 2000). Catholic school principals are expected to be religious leaders, (within their school and parish community), instructional leaders, administrators, and communicators (Campbell, 2002; Drahmann & Stenger, 1989). Within the broad range of the job description of the Catholic school principal, it is necessary to find the person whose strengths best match the expectations and perceptions of what both teachers and parents believe the school needs. It is also important for principals in these schools to have an understanding of where to focus their energies in order to be most effective in meeting the needs of the parents and students in their schools.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine what behaviors are perceived by teachers and parents in Catholic schools as most important for Catholic school principals to exhibit in order to be most effective in their positions. Data were gathered using a survey based on the job description of a Catholic school principal. Teachers and parents were asked to rate behaviors in the categories of religious, instructional, and administrative leadership as well as in communication.

Using a Likert scale, the respondents rated behaviors as highly important to not important. The behaviors were then ranked by importance within each of the subscales of leadership styles, principal as religious leader, instructional leader, administrative leader, and communicator. The behaviors were also ranked overall. The teachers' responses were compared to the parents' responses to determine if there were significant differences between the responses.

### Research Questions

This is a study of a comparison of the perceptions of teachers and parents of behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals with the following main questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

2. What are parents' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?
3. Is there a significant difference between teachers and parents in their perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

### Definitions

Catholic schools are private schools whose fundamental purpose is to form children in their faith and help carry out the mission of the Church. Catholic schools can be Diocesan schools (run by the Department of Catholic Schools in a diocese), parochial schools that are connected with a parish, or schools that are run by an order of priests or nuns. The schools in this study were all parochial schools. Their funding comes mostly from tuition revenues, fundraising efforts, and a subsidy from the parish with which they are associated.

Leadership styles are the different ways in which a principal interacts with the staff of the school, the parents, and other members of the school community. Some examples are consultative, participative, democratic, innovative, and supportive (Brunn, 1996; B. J. Davis, 1995; E. L. Davis, 1992; Helm, 1989; Higgins, 1993; Hobson, 1994; Marschilok, 1993; Politz, 1991; Stockton, 1997).

The principal as religious leader is defined as those behaviors of the principal pertaining to the Catholic identity of the school, such as modeling Christian values,

highlighting the religious education program, developing the Catholic culture, and managing the values of the school.

The principal as instructional leader is defined as those behaviors of the principal pertaining to the educational aspects of the school including managing curriculum and instruction, monitoring student progress, supervising teachers and staff, and setting instructional strategies.

The principal as administrator is defined as the behaviors of the principal pertaining to the management of the school including obtaining and managing resources, cultivating the climate and culture, working with members of the school community, and hiring qualified staff and faculty.

The principal as communicator is defined as the behaviors of the principal pertaining to defining and disseminating the philosophy and mission of the school, communicating goals to the school community, and building coalitions to help meet those goals.

#### Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

This study was conducted using 10 Catholic elementary schools in the metropolitan Portland, Oregon area with student populations between 200 and 300, averaging 240 students. The schools were similar in demographics as determined by the location of the school in the metro area. The study is limited to this northwestern city and does not include rural or inner city schools. All schools include Kindergarten through eighth grade students, but not high school age students.



Surveys were distributed to all teachers and parents at these schools. The survey asked for the respondents' beliefs. It was assumed they answered with their perception of what is most important to them regarding principals' behaviors.

### Significance of the Study

How can educational administrators act to make a difference in the lives of their students? An effective instructional leader defines the mission of the school and promotes a sound instructional climate in which optimum learning can take place (Krug, 1992).

The results of this study identifies parent and teacher perceptions of what effective instructional leaders should do. Effective schools research and anecdotal reports tell us that the leader in the school does make a difference in the effectiveness of the school. This study makes a contribution to the knowledge about behaviors that are highly important for Catholic elementary school principals to exhibit in order to be most effective in their positions.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

There is increasing pressure from society for schools to be effective in educating children. Generally, this implies that children's test scores will get better every year and that the gap between racial and ethnic groups will narrow. Effective schools research grew as a way to verify or dispute Coleman et al.'s report in 1966, Jencks' reanalysis of Coleman et al.'s data in 1972, and *A Nation at Risk* report in 1983. Most interpretations of Coleman et al.'s study indicate that schools made no difference in student achievement. Jencks reaffirmed that school success was largely a result of socioeconomic status, not of teachers or schools and that a student's eventual job success was similar to the parents' occupational status. Another researcher, Silberman (1971), concluded from his lengthy studies that schools were "not only ineffective, but mindless as well" (as cited in Glickman et al., 2001, pp. 39-40).

As a result of these studies, research began to focus on individual schools that are exceptional and achieve results. These schools are effective and succeed while others do not. This review of the literature examines some studies that identify the characteristics of effective schools and then specifically Catholic schools.

Often, schools identified as effective were determined so by standardized test scores (Couch, 1991; Hicks, 1991; Marschilok, 1993; Politz, 1991; Urbain, 1989). Schools can also be identified as effective based on the results of the leadership styles and practices of the principals as perceived by their constituents, including teachers, parents, students, and central office personnel (Davis, 1995; Hausman & Goldring,

1996; Helm, 1989; Higgins, 1993; Hobson, 1994; Johnson, 1995; Pendola, 1996).

Levine and Lezotte (1990) describe an effective school as one where all students master the intended curriculum.

Next, the role of the principal in schools identified as effective is examined. The review then focuses on Catholic school principals also identified as effective. The focus of these studies and the characteristics examined reveal similarities and differences between the roles of public school and Catholic school administrators.

Most of the studies reviewed in this literature search used predetermined leadership styles or models as the focus of their examination. The researchers attempted to find out what type of principals fit these styles and how effective they are perceived to be by their teachers (Couch, 1991; Davis, 1992; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1990; Hausman & Goldring, 1996; Helm, 1989; Higgins, 1993; Koll, Robertson, Lampe, & Hegedus, 1996; Krug, 1992; Marschilock, 1993; Politz, 1991; Singh, 1994; Stockton, 1997). Finally, the focus of this review will turn to the teachers' and parents' perceptions of the most important behaviors for the principals in their schools.

### Characteristics of Effective Schools

Research reported by Coleman et al. (1966) led to the belief "that schools could not become much more effective than they already are in working with large numbers of disadvantaged low achievers" (as cited in Levine & Levine, 1996, p. 428). Many studies were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s to determine what schools can and were doing to make a difference for students and their learning.

Much of the research done has utilized anywhere from five to dozens of correlates to distinguish between more and less effective schools. However, most of the recent research has used a variation of seven frequently identified correlates. These have been drawn from case studies of schools in which the observers concluded that these characteristics accounted for the school's success (Levine & Lezotte, 1990). Shoemaker (as cited in Levine & Levine, 1996) summarizes the characteristics of effective schools and lists several factors contributing to them: (a) a safe and orderly environment, (b) a clear school mission, (c) instructional leadership, (d) a climate of high expectations, (e) opportunity to learn and student time on task, (f) frequent monitoring of student progress, and (g) positive home-school relations.

Levine and Lezotte (1990) emphasize that the correlates of unusual effectiveness should be viewed more as prerequisites for attaining high and equitable levels of student achievement rather than as a guarantee that a school will be successful. Success in dealing with one or a few correlates will not bring about the effective outcomes without dealing with other correlates. There are many steps and strategies to consider in using these correlates to make a school more effective.

Schools with high student achievement share an organizational culture in which all stakeholders have a common purpose and work together to reach their goals. The culture reflects the organization's values and beliefs, rituals, philosophy, norms of interaction, and expectations about the way things are done. The culture, along with the physical plant, organizational structure, social relationships, and individual behavior, determines the climate of the school (Kaplan & Evans, 1997).

Schools can be identified as effective without using test scores as a measure. When effective school correlates are implemented and data obtained on the school's efforts, professional staff may perceive their school's improvement to be greater than the standardized achievement test scores indicate (Lafontaine, 1995).

#### Characteristics of Effective Catholic Schools

Reports by Coleman (1987) (as cited in Mendoza, 1991) and Greeley (1982) (as cited in Mendoza, 1991) assert that Catholic schools tend to be more effective than public schools in educating students, especially minority students, due to the schools' cultures. In addition, interviews, observations, and surveys conducted by Mendoza indicate that the Catholic secondary schools studied influence students positively due to a culture of values found in the Catholic Church. Based on student, parent, and faculty/staff perceptions, she concluded that student academic aspirations and achievement are developed in the Catholic secondary school because of challenging academic programs and high expectations for success. She also found that mutual respect and sense of family were reported to exist and that student self-esteem is believed to be enhanced on the Catholic school campus as a direct result of the care, respect, and nurturing received from teachers; the opportunities available for religious expression; and parental support. The foundation of the Catholic Church is the structure in which a community of values enables students, parents, and faculties/staffs to be companions in education. Fair, firm, and consistent discipline and care for pupils were manifested on each of the four single sex campuses studied by Mendoza (1991).

Mutschler (1985), in her study of Catholic schools in a large northeastern Roman Catholic diocese, determined effectiveness by the degree to which the organization realized its goals. Highly effective schools were characterized by cooperative teamwork among the principal, teachers, parents, and students, along with interdepartmental planning and coordination; teacher involvement in major decisions related to their work; and a consultative-participative administrative style of the principal. Highly effective schools also had goal emphasis, students' influence, teachers' support to others, and communication with students. A strong correlation existed between the principal and teacher perceptions of the organization of the school.

#### The Role of the Principal in Effective Schools

Areas of leadership. Levine and Lezotte (1990) identify the building principal as the most critical in determining the leadership of a school and agree on the characteristics of unusually effective principals. These principals are willing to select and remove teachers in order to have those most willing and able to contribute to the effectiveness of the school in place. They are also willing to bend or challenge rules and buffer the school and its teachers from external pressures to ensure effective operation of the school. Another behavior of an effective principal involves frequent visits to classrooms combined with constant personal surveillance of activities taking place in the school. Other key leadership characteristics of effective principals are the tendencies to spend much time and energy devoted to school improvement actions, providing large amounts of support for their teachers, obtaining additional resources for

their schools, and having and utilizing effectively instructional support personnel (Levine & Lezotte, 1990).

Levine and Lezotte (1990) define superior instructional leadership behaviors as key to effective schools and detail four areas in which effective leaders tend to excel. Developing a mission and goals, framing and using the goals to apply to all children, and communicating them to all constituencies is the first area of behavior. Promoting quality instruction by supervising and evaluating instruction, allocating and protecting instructional time, coordinating the curriculum, promoting content coverage, and monitoring student progress is the second area of behavior. The third area of effective behavior is promoting an academic learning climate by establishing positive expectations and standards, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and students, and promoting professional development. Finally, developing a supportive work environment is the fourth area in which principals provide superior instructional leadership. This includes creating a safe and orderly environment, providing opportunities for meaningful student involvement, developing staff collaboration and cohesion, securing outside resources in support of school goals, and forging links between the home and the school.

The National Education Association (1986) examined research to summarize the leadership role of the principal in the areas of instructional leadership, teacher evaluation, and student achievement. The summary of the findings “indicate that the single most important factor in determining the success of a school is the ability of the principal to coordinate, organize, and support the staff in planning, implementing, and

evaluating improvements in the school's instructional program" (p. 5). The report also states that "the focus of future research must be to clearly articulate the specific behaviors encompassed by the broader principal functions in order to make the instructional leadership concept more definitive" (p. 5).

Relationships between principals and schools. Hallinger and Heck (1996) reviewed the literature on the relationship between the principal's role and school effectiveness during the period from 1980 to 1995. This relationship is complex as the principal's role is a part of a web of environmental, personal, and in-school relationships that combine to influence the outcomes of an organization.

Hallinger and Heck (1996) identified 40 studies that explored the relationship between principal leadership behavior and school effectiveness. Earlier studies tended to cluster in what they describe as direct-effects studies, which neglected the effect of intervening variables. Such studies lack the power to shed further light on the nature of the principal's role in school effectiveness. The greatest progress has come from research that places the principal in the context of the school and its environment. These studies used a mediated-effects model.

Researchers should focus greater attention on uncovering the relationship between principal leadership and those mediating variables that we now believe influence student achievement. School mission, teacher expectations, school culture, and facets of the school's instructional organization are among the intervening alterable variables identified in these studies (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, pp. 35-36).



The authors concluded that studies using the direct-effects model showed the effects of principal leadership to be nonexistent, weak, conflicting, or suspect in terms of validity. The studies categorized under the mediated-effects model yielded more frequent instances of positive findings concerning the role of the principal in school effectiveness. "These studies support the notion that principal leadership can make a difference in student learning" (p. 37). The principal's leadership that makes a difference is aimed toward influencing internal school processes that are directly linked to student learning. "Studies based on a mediated-effects model frequently uncovered statistically significant indirect effects of principal leadership on student achievement via such variables" (p. 37).

Some of the studies reviewed support Hallinger's and Heck's claims while others do not. Hobson (1994) was unable to draw any conclusions from his study that compared the leadership styles of elementary principals when grouped by student performance. He grouped each school into one of three academic achievement categories according to students' third grade standardized test scores. Subordinates for each principal were sampled for the study. Results were not significant so data could only be discussed in a summary, descriptive manner.

Couch (1991) examined the relationship between the degree of a principal's instructional leadership and student achievement. She analyzed standardized test scores of eighth graders and compared them to questionnaires sent to principals. Findings indicated that the degree to which the principal demonstrated instructional leadership had no effect on student achievement scores.

Another study of middle school principals' instructional leadership behaviors and academic achievement found there were no differences between self-perceived scores of principals from high achieving schools and those from low achieving schools. Standardized tests were again used to determine the achievement level of the school. Teachers' perceptions of the principals' behaviors indicated differences in only 2 of the 10 behaviors measured (Hunter, 1995).

A qualitative multi-site case study examined the nature of principals' instructional leadership behaviors and practices in urban middle schools that served large populations of minority students and the connections between those behaviors and student outcomes. Sithole (1995) found that instructional leadership is enhanced by a shared vision and a common purpose, is planned, and is characterized by informed behaviors. It is situational and purposeful, student-centered, and a shared responsibility. However, the principals in the middle schools believed they influenced student achievement indirectly and other student outcomes both directly and indirectly.

The relationship between leadership behavior of high school principals and selected areas of educational achievement was examined using two groups of high schools. Based on New York's statewide measures of student achievement, the schools were grouped as either high achieving or other than high achieving. Data were obtained from surveys completed by teachers at the high schools. Marschlok (1993) concluded that the leadership behavior of high school principals related to the selected areas of educational achievement in an indirect and complex manner.

B. J. Davis (1995) spent several months studying one large urban high school principal with a reputation for effectiveness. She questioned the staff, faculty, parents, and students about changes that had occurred in the school and their perceptions of the principal's role in those changes. She found that modeling, delegation, negotiation, accountability, flexibility, openness, being proactive, toughness, acknowledging, and celebrating were all put into practice by this principal. The principal focused on setting high standards as well as personal goals in a safe, orderly environment. She valued communication and participative decision-making. Davis described the high school principal's role as complex and noted that her instructional leadership involved setting the framework for learning to occur.

A large study in Illinois examined if instructional leadership and instructional climate predict student learning outcomes. The findings demonstrated a significant positive correlation between principals' self-ratings of instructional leadership and student achievement. The correlations were strongest for academic satisfaction, recognition, accomplishment, and commitment. However, no significant relationships were found between teacher ratings of instructional leadership and student achievement (Krug, 1992).

"There are differences of opinion over which facets of leadership-personality attributes, behaviors, or context- are most closely related to school effectiveness" (Koll et al., 1996, p. 1). These authors suggest the need for action research to study the relationship of principals' leadership styles to personality, the organizational context, work satisfaction, gender and other variables. They suggest this research should be a

collaborative effort of principals, teachers, university professors and others who are studying school effectiveness.

Principals' and parents' perspectives. Gantner (2000) developed a survey to compare the perspectives of principals and parents regarding the principal's role. She identified the four constructs of promoting democratic participation, creating an inviting culture, ethical practice, and flexibility in professional practice for the administrators. The parent model consisted of creating an inviting culture, ethical practice, and understanding families' beliefs. She found that administrators and parents share some beliefs, and at the same time, view the role of the principal quite differently.

In summary, although the research to determine what makes effective principals varies, some characteristics seem to be consistent. Effective principals are fair, provide good discipline, show concern for students, and involve staff in decision-making. Other recommendations for effective principals include: being knowledgeable about instruction, being an instructional leader, having a mission, and expecting oneself, teachers, and students to accomplish the goals established in the school's mission (Brunn, 1996; Urbain, 1989).

#### The Role of the Principal in Effective Catholic Schools

The principal is the key to a quality Catholic school. The quality of a principal's leadership is affected by the vision, knowledge, competence, and personal qualities of the person who holds that position. The principal's leadership is a blend of educational skill, managerial skill and a dynamism which is able to

move others to perform well and to grow spiritually and educationally (Drahmann & Stenger, 1989, p. 7).

Catholic educators want students to do their best academically and become good Catholics. Challenges that make this goal difficult to accomplish include a changing environment within the Catholic school. Keeping a Catholic identity with decreasing numbers of religious (men or women bound by vows) and priests, and meeting educational expectations while remaining a faith community contribute to this changed environment (Pejza, 1985).

A Catholic school principal must provide both academic and religious leadership to have an effective Catholic school. A principal can help to make a school a more effective environment by working to develop its distinctly Catholic culture. The keys to leadership are vision and inspiration. To develop a school culture, the principal must be committed, purposeful, and involved in managing the values of the school; painstaking in the hiring and development of teachers; and adept at building coalitions with competing constituencies to reach desired goals (Pejza, 1985, p. 1).

Drahmann (1985) also attempts to clarify the major roles of a Catholic school principal. Those roles include teacher, teacher of teachers, financier, one who deals with boards of education and parent organizations, one who works with church authorities and religious orders, one who operates under laws, evaluator, and marketing specialist.

Transformational principals in Catholic schools operationalize their symbolic and cultural roles through communicating high expectations by frequent supervision, feedback, contact, recognition, and written documents. They model religious values, carefully select teachers, emphasize the importance of teachers as role models, highlight the centrality of the religious education program, and maintain high visibility. They demonstrate climate-setting behaviors by promoting positive relationships among teachers, high morale, shared instructional leadership, and collaborative decision-making. Linking parents, teachers, children, and administrators into relationships within the parish framework is a significant culture-building factor (Helm, 1989).

Some studies, although done in Catholic schools, did not address the Catholicity of the school, which involves incorporating faith into the physical environment as well as the curriculum, instruction, and general climate of the school. For example, a study to identify leadership styles of principals as perceived by their teachers and to determine if leadership styles of principals correlated with achievement of seventh-grade students was conducted in Catholic schools in Indiana. Politz (1991) found that significant differences existed between comprehensive score gains for students and leadership styles of principals. Students of principals who had a delegating style (turns over responsibility for directions and implementations) of leadership had significantly higher mean test scores than did students of principals with other styles.

Higgins (1993) found that principals who use a participative style (high relationship, low task) of leadership were perceived by their teachers as being better able to frame school goals and supervise and evaluate instruction. Parents in the school

who perceived the principal using a participative style rated the principal higher in promoting a positive school climate.

The role of the Catholic school principal is much like that of a public school principal. Both are concerned with being instructional leaders; building relationships with teachers, parents, and students; and making the school as effective as possible for the students. Principals in achieving schools seem to internalize the norm of high expectations for students and teachers and use this to drive their own leadership behaviors (Pavan & Reid, 1991). A Catholic school principal must also provide religious leadership as well as academic leadership in order to be effective.

Table 1 shows the behaviors of effective principals as identified by the different researchers mentioned. The table helps to identify the behaviors that are similar among the studies examined. This table also serves as a tool to begin to categorize the behaviors and for developing this study's survey questions.

#### Teacher and Parent Perceptions of Effective Principals

Leadership styles exhibited by principals in schools do influence the perception of the teaching staff. The particular style(s) principals choose to employ on a daily basis can affect the way a school building is run (Brunn, 1996; Urbain, 1989).

When principals self-assess their own leadership style, most claim to have a democratic or supporting style that is low directive and highly supportive. Also common is the directing style (high directive, low supportive) and the coaching style (high directive, high supportive). No principal in Stockton's (1997) study claimed the delegating style (low directive, low supportive) as his or her preferred style. School

Table 1

Behaviors of Effective School Principals

Researchers	Behaviors
Glickman, Gordon, and	Exerts strong leadership
Ross-Gordon (2001)	Demonstrates a climate of expectation
	Creates an orderly but not rigid atmosphere
	Communicates priority on learning the basics
	Diverts school energy and resources to maintain priorities
	Monitors student and teacher achievement
Hausman and Goldring	Demonstrates interest in innovative ideas
(1996)	Indicates an awareness of what goes on in classroom
	Appears highly visible around the school and makes many contacts with students and staff
	Gets resources needed for the school
	Acknowledges and rewards efforts by staff
	Deals effectively with pressures from outside the school



Table 1 (Continued)

Researchers	Behaviors
Krug (1992)	<p>Defines mission</p> <p>Manages curriculum and instruction</p> <p>Supervises and supports teachers</p> <p>Monitors student progress</p> <p>Promotes instructional climate</p>
Levine and Lezotte (1990)	<p>Develops and communicates goals to all</p> <p>Promotes quality instruction</p> <p>Promotes an academic learning climate</p> <p>Develops a supportive work environment</p>
National Education Association (1986)	<p>Coordinates, organizes and supports the staff in planning, implementation, and evaluating improvements in the school's instructional program</p>
Sweeney (as cited in Davis, 1992)	<p>Coordinates instructional program</p> <p>Emphasizes achievement</p> <p>Evaluates pupil progress frequently</p> <p>Provides orderly atmosphere</p> <p>Sets instructional strategies</p> <p>Supports teachers</p>

Table 1 (Continued)

Catholic School Researchers	Behaviors
Drahmann (1985)	<p>Teaches teachers</p> <p>Manages finances</p> <p>Works with boards of education and parent organizations</p> <p>Works with church authorities and religious orders</p> <p>Operates under laws</p> <p>Evaluates</p> <p>Specializes in marketing</p>
Helm (1989)	<p>Communicates high expectations</p> <p>Models religious values</p> <p>Selects teachers carefully</p> <p>Emphasizes importance of teachers as role models</p> <p>Highlights the religious education program</p> <p>Maintains high visibility</p>
Mutschler (1985)	<p>Is consultative</p> <p>Is participative</p>

Table 1 (Continued)

Catholic School Researchers	Behaviors
Pejza (1985)	<p>Works to develop Catholic culture</p> <p>Commits to managing the values of the school</p> <p>Is painstaking in the hiring and development of teachers</p> <p>Builds coalitions to reach desired goals</p>
Poltz (1991)	Delegates
Stockton (1997)	<p>Is democratic</p> <p>Is highly supportive</p>

climate was defined as morale, smooth administration, and professional development and received higher ratings from teachers whose principal claimed to use the democratic or supporting leadership style. There were also significantly higher levels of parental involvement at schools that had principals who were highly supportive rather than highly directive (Stockton, 1997).

Six leadership behaviors were identified by Sweeney (1982) as behaviors of effective principals. These are: (a) coordinates instructional programs, (b) emphasizes achievement, (c) frequently evaluates pupil progress, (d) provides orderly atmosphere, (e) sets instructional strategies, and (f) supports teachers. Davis (1992) compared these behaviors to the leadership behaviors of two urban high school principals. Teachers in the high schools were asked to respond to questions about their principal's leadership behavior in the areas identified by Sweeney (1982). Four of the six leadership behaviors (emphasizes achievement, provides orderly atmosphere, frequently evaluates pupil progress, and supports teachers) were identified by teachers as behaviors of their principals that affected improvements in their schools. Davis concluded that even when the principal played a secondary role, as in coordinating instructional programs and setting instructional strategies, his/her behavior was still important to the effectiveness of the school.

In their study, Hausman and Goldring (1996) examined differences in teachers' ratings of effective principal leadership in magnet and nonmagnet schools in Cincinnati, Ohio's system of school choice. In a sample of 10 magnet schools and 10 nonmagnet schools, nonmagnet principals were rated as more effective leaders by their teachers

than were magnet principals. There was a lack of correlation between teachers' ratings of effective principal leadership and student outcomes. Indicators of teacher professionalism appeared to be the strongest predictors of effective principal leadership as rated by teachers, particularly teachers' perceptions of their own opportunity to learn. Goal congruence and resources were significant predictors in both school types, and may be even more critical factors in nonmagnet schools. In magnet schools, greater school size was correlated with lower ratings of principal effectiveness (Hausman & Goldring, 1996).

When Hicks (1991) surveyed teachers, parents, and students from four different public middle schools in South Carolina, she found that their perceptions of their principals were all similar. The principals consisted of one white male, one black male, one white female, and one black female. They had different levels of experience, but all had been at their respective schools less than 10 years. All had master's degrees and middle school certification. The majority of teachers were white females. The schools all had similar demographics. The respondents, using a Likert scale, assessed items that were developed by Hicks. She researched the indicators of effective principals and listed six areas congruent with those mentioned in Levine and Levine (1996).

The parents' overall perceptions of the principal's instructional role were similar to each other in the four schools selected. They ranked their principals highest on "sets high academic standards" and lowest on "communicates school's goals." The teachers all overwhelmingly agreed with the parents on all 10 of the items pertaining to principal behaviors on the survey. They, too, ranked "sets high academic standards" as their

perceptions of their principal's strongest behavior. The data also overwhelmingly indicated that the perceptions of the principal's role were similar among the teachers from the four schools. The students' responses were not as consistent. The teachers' rankings were higher than the parents. The lowest rating from the teachers was still higher than the highest parent ranking. Students ranked the principal higher on perceived instructional behaviors than parents, but lower than teachers (Hicks, 1991). Another study of the perceptions of principals, students, and parents in their high schools revealed there was a tendency for principals and parents to be similar in their perceptions of the principal's role (Singh, 1994).

To summarize, studies of sample schools already identified as effective, either according to test scores or other indicators, found that the perceptions of the parents and teachers were similar in regard to the leaders in the schools. When the principal's constituent groups were queried about what they perceived as important expectations for the elementary school principal, findings revealed that there was a great range and broad diversity of skills and expectations that were perceived to be important for the elementary school principal. The perceptions of these significant constituents have been underutilized, limited, or nonexistent in the past. Because the principal is expected to work more collaboratively with parents and staff and because parents are being recognized, encouraged, and trained to be partners in their children's education, their perceptions are important. Such perceptions can enhance training and preparation programs for principals, and the selection and assessment processes for principals (DeMeo, 1993).

### Summary

Glickman et al. (2001) suggest that effective schools research needs to focus on school improvement. Rather than ask what effective schools look like, the authors state that a better question would ask about how schools improve over time. They cite several studies and a list of characteristics of improving schools. A summary of these characteristics lists “varied sources of leadership” as the first one. This leadership drives many of the other characteristics. In fact, the authors name five propositions of what to do with successful schools research, and all involve supervision.

In summary, supervision must be viewed as developmental if schools are to become more successful. Supervision must not only respond to current teacher performance but also encourage greater involvement, autonomous thinking, and collective action by teachers. The first order of business for a supervisor is to build the staff into a team. In order to improve school instruction, a supervisor has to work with staff to create a professional togetherness. They must share a common purpose for their instruction and they must have confidence that their collective action will make a difference in their students’ lives (Glickman et al., 2001, p. 52).

None of the research cited, with the exception of DeMeo (1993), asked the teachers and parents what they expected from their principal. The Catholic Church believes that parents are the primary educators of their children and that the Catholic school supports and encourages the teachings in the home. Parents of children in Catholic schools pay tuition for their children and often are also required to volunteer a

certain number of hours in the school. Therefore, the expectations they have for the principal of their school should be considered. Discovering which behaviors parents believe are most important for Catholic school principals and comparing them to what teachers believe are the most important behaviors could have implications for the selection, training, and effectiveness of Catholic school principals.



## Chapter 3

### Methodology

This is a study of a comparison of the perceptions of teachers and parents of behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals with the following main questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?
2. What are parents' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?
3. Is there a significant difference between teachers and parents in their perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

Using Creswell's (1994) approach as a guide, this chapter is organized using six components. They are the survey design, the sample, the instrumentation, variables in the study, data collection procedures, and the data analysis.

#### Survey Design

This study used a quantitative survey research method. The information needed to answer the above questions came directly from the people involved (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998). The purpose of the survey method is to generalize from a sample of

Catholic schools in a western archdiocese within a northwestern metro area to a greater population of Catholic schools so that inferences can be made about the characteristics and behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals as perceived by teachers and parents and find if there are significant differences.

### Sample

All schools in the study were similar in terms of demographics. This study was conducted using 10 Catholic elementary schools in the metropolitan Portland area with student populations between 200 and 300, averaging 240 students. These schools include students in the Kindergarten through eighth grades. The 10 schools have an average of 17 teachers each. The number of families at each school ranged from 136 to 189, some of whom represented single parent families and some two-parent families. Each family, rather than every parent, was asked to complete the survey. A 100% return rate would mean there would be 1,630 parent surveys returned.

### Instrumentation

The survey instrument was a self-designed instrument that consists of several questions in each of the areas: leadership styles, principal as religious leader, principal as instructional leader, administrator, and communicator. The principal's job description from the Archdiocese of Portland was used as an organizer (see Appendix A). This job description was developed from Drahmman and Stenger's (1989) publication and lends itself well to the behaviors found in the research described in the review of the literature. Each survey question was matched to the behaviors identified in the research in Chapter 2. Permission was granted from the Assistant

Superintendent to use this as the basis for the instrument. Subjects completed the survey by circling answers on a Likert scale from number 5 as highly important to number 1 as not important regarding principal effectiveness. Table 2 matches the behaviors of effective principals listed in Table 1 to the actual survey questions (see Appendix B).

Content validity process. Content validity testing was completed on this survey document during the winter of 2003. There were 12 teachers, 8 administrators, and 12 parents who read through the questions and rated the appropriateness of the questions in determining the behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals. Considerable time was spent in discussion with the administrators after they reviewed the questions. The researcher modified and clarified the questions in response to their comments (see Appendix B). Appendix C includes a copy of the survey.

Reliability. The survey was piloted using respondents from a school not included in the study. Fifteen teachers and 15 parents were asked to complete the survey. After parents and teachers responded to the survey, reliability estimates were computed on the survey's subscales using coefficient alpha.

The questions were grouped by subscales into the categories of leadership styles (questions 5, 6, 13, 23, and 30), principal as religious leader (questions 2, 7, 8, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 23), principal as instructional leader (questions 3, 9, 17, 22, 24, 26, 27, and 31), principal as administrator (questions 10, 11, 14, 19, 21, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, and 35), and principal as communicator (questions 1, 4, 15, 20, and 25).

Table 2

Survey Questions Matched to Behaviors of Effective Principals

Major areas	Behaviors from research	Survey questions
Leadership/ Personality Styles	Strong leadership	5. Use problem-solving skills with staff
	Sets a climate of expectations	6. Encourage innovations in the school
	Interested in innovative ideas	
	Consultative	13. Be highly supportive of teachers
	Participative	23. Work collaboratively with parish staff
	Democratic	
	Highly supportive	30. Promote staff morale
Principal as Religious Leader	Works with church authorities and religious orders	2. Be a practicing Catholic
	Models religious values	7. Participate in spiritual growth activities for herself/himself
	Highlights the religious education program	8. Provide teacher in-services for faith formation
	Works to develop Catholic culture	
	Commits to managing the values of the school	12. Provide an environment where the Catholic faith can be practiced
		14. Hire teachers who can contribute to the religious mission of the school
		16. Lead the school community in prayer

Table 2 (Continued)

Major areas	Behaviors from research	Survey questions
Principal as Religious Leader (Continued)		18. Create an environment where moral development is emphasized
		23. Work collaboratively with parish staff
Principal as Instructional Leader	Communicates priority on learning the basics	3. Facilitate the evaluation of the curriculum
	Monitors student and teacher achievement	9. Provide for a school environment where children are respectful
	Indicates an awareness of what goes on in classroom	17. Show appreciation to staff
	Acknowledges and rewards efforts by staff	22. Review progress reports of students
	Manages curriculum and instruction	24. Be able to teach teachers
	Supervises and supports teachers	26. Conduct evaluations of staff
	Monitors student progress	27. Show appreciation to students
	Promotes quality instructional climate	31. Promote an academic learning environment
	Promotes an academic learning climate	
	Coordinates the instructional program	
	Emphasizes achievement	

Table 2 (Continued)

Major areas	Behaviors from research	Survey questions
Principal as Instructional Leader (Continued)	Evaluates pupil progress frequently	
	Sets instructional strategies	
	Supports teachers	
	Teaches teachers	
	Communicates high expectations	
Principal as Administrator	Diverts school energy and resources to maintain priorities	10. Delegate responsibilities 11. Respond calmly to crises
	Gets resources need for the school	14. Hire teachers who can contribute to the religious mission of the school
	Deals effectively with pressures from outside the school	19. Participate in all school advisory council meetings
	Develops a supportive work environment	21. Provide in-service for the school advisory council
	Provides an orderly but not rigid atmosphere	28. Work collaboratively with parents
	Manages finances	29. Encourage continuing education for teachers
	Works with boards of education and parent organizations	32. Have high expectations for those with whom s/he works
	Operates under laws	33. Plan finances to obtain needed resources
	Evaluates	

Table 2 (Continued)

Major areas	Behaviors from research	Survey questions
Principal as Administrator (continued)	Carefully selects teachers	34. Select and hire competent teachers
	Emphasizes importance of teachers as role models	35. Know school law as it applies to Catholic schools
	Commits to managing the values of the school	
	Painstaking in the hiring and development of teachers	
Principal as Communicator	Maintains high visibility around the school and makes many contacts with students and staff	1. Be a good communicator 4. Lead the school's public relations activities
	Defines mission	15. Publish appropriate handbooks
	Develops and communicates goals to all constituents	20. Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school
	Specializes in marketing	
	Communicates high expectations	25. Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish
	Builds coalitions to reach desired goals	

The reliability coefficients for the subscales were as follows: leadership styles (.67), principal as instructional leader (.70), principal as religious leader (.81), and principal as administrative leader (.74). Because the reliability coefficient for the communicator subscale was .57, separate statistical analyses were conducted for each question.

#### Variables in the Study

The independent variable in the study is position with two levels: teacher and parent. The dependent variables are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the following areas: leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Approval from the Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools was received to conduct the survey with permission of the principal at each school. There was an assurance made to the principals that this survey is not an evaluation of their effectiveness, but rather a study to determine what teachers and parents perceive to be the behaviors needed to be an effective principal.

Each school was given enough surveys for every teacher and family in the school. One parent from each family was asked to complete the survey. There was collaboration with each principal on the best way to distribute the materials. For example, some teachers were given the surveys through their mailboxes at school. The parent surveys were sent to them through the school's normal procedures. For example, if a school normally sends a newsletter out or a weekly envelope goes home, the survey,



along with a cover letter, was included. To ensure confidentiality, a self-addressed envelope was included with each survey. This gave the respondents the option of returning the survey to the school office for pick-up or mailing it to the researcher. The only distinguishing factors on the survey were the checks for whether the person is a teacher or a parent and what school they are associated with. The enrollment statistics for each school were obtained and were not needed to be included on the survey. This method assured that there was a cross section of parents and teachers responding to the survey. Paperwork for IRB approval was completed and submitted upon approval of this study. (See Appendix D.)

#### Data Analysis

After all surveys were collected and data were entered, the data were analyzed using the SPSS program and comparisons were made between the teachers' and parents' responses. The mean for all responses on each question was calculated as well as the mean for each subscale area. A *t*-test was conducted to test for differences between the teachers' and parents' perceptions in each of the subscale areas using a significance level of .05.

## Chapter 4

### Results

The purpose of this study was to determine what behaviors are perceived by teachers and parents in Catholic elementary schools as most important for Catholic school principals to exhibit in order to be most effective in their positions. Data were gathered using a survey based on the job description of a Catholic school principal and a review of the literature. Teachers and parents were asked to rate the effectiveness of behaviors of principals on 35 items that were categorized into the subscales of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator. Using a Likert scale, the respondents rated behaviors as highly important (5) to not important (1).

First, the means and standard deviations were determined for the teachers' responses for each individual question within the subscales and for the subscales themselves. Secondly, the means and standard deviations of the parents' responses were determined. Then, t-tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences in the responses of the two groups on the subscales. After that, the behaviors were ranked by importance for each group and compared.

The three main questions of this study were:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?
2. What are parents' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective

Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

3. Is there a significant difference between teachers and parents in their perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

In January 2004, the survey was hand-delivered to the 10 schools whose principals volunteered for the study. Because the initial return rate for the surveys was about 25%, a follow-up survey was sent again in March to try to increase the return rate. Table 3 shows the number of families and staff at each school, the number of surveys returned from each, and the resulting percentage.

The overall percentage rate for the return of surveys for families was 33%. However, there were 23 surveys returned in which either the school or the role was not identified. Removing those 23 surveys from the total number of families left a total of 1,607 families with a return rate of identifiable surveys of 540, changing the percentage rate from 33% to 34%.

Surveys were given to 138 teachers in the 10 schools. Of the surveys returned, 68 were identified as being completed by teachers, resulting in a return rate of 49%.

#### Research Question 1

What are teachers' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

Table 3

Return Rates of Surveys for Families and Teachers by School

School	Number of families	Surveys returned	Percentage families	Number of teachers	Surveys returned	Percentage teachers
1	189	67	35%	13	8	62%
2	170	35	21%	15	14	93%
3	160	67	42%	15	3	20%
4	155	60	39%	15	9	60%
5	160	69	43%	13	4	31%
6	148	48	32%	13	5	38%
7	136	53	39%	13	6	46%
8	170	7	4%	15	5	33%
9	167	73	44%	15	6	40%
10	175	61	35%	11	8	73%
Totals	1630	540	33%	138	68	49%

Note. Twenty-three surveys did not have the role or school identified and thus were removed from the total bringing this number to 1,607.

Means of subscales. The means of the subscales for the teachers were all in the important (4) range. The principal as religious leader subscale mean was lowest at 4.31 ( $SD = 0.54$ ). The principal as instructional leader subscale mean was 4.44 ( $SD = 0.45$ ). The principal as administrative leader subscale mean was 4.47 ( $SD = 0.37$ ). The mean for the leadership styles subscale was the highest at 4.59 ( $SD = 0.47$ ). The mean for the principal as communicator subscale was not computed because the reliability estimate for the items was less than .70.

Means of questions. The means of the individual questions for the teachers' responses ranged from neutral, 3.43 ( $SD = 1.11$ ) on question 22 (review progress reports of students), to important, 4.96 ( $SD = 0.21$ ) on question 1 (be an effective communicator) (see Table 4).

## Research Question 2

What are parents' perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

Means of subscales. The means of the subscales for the parents fell in the important (4) category. The principal as religious leader subscale mean was lowest at 4.11 ( $SD = 0.55$ ). The leadership styles subscale mean was highest at 4.57 ( $SD = 0.43$ ). The principal as administrative leader subscale mean was 4.44 ( $SD = 0.35$ ). The principal as instructional leader subscale mean was 4.47 ( $SD = 0.36$ ). The mean for the principal as communicator subscale was not computed because the reliability estimate for the items was less than .70.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Responses

<u>Question</u>	<u>Subscale</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
5. Use problem-solving skills with staff	S	68	4.62	0.55
6. Encourage innovations in the school	S	68	4.35	0.75
13. Use appropriate strategies to support teachers on their performance	S	68	4.68	0.68
30. Promote school staff morale	S	68	4.71	0.52
Leadership styles		68	4.59	0.47
2. Be a practicing Catholic (rather than just Christian)	R	68	4.40	0.93
7. Participate in spiritual growth activities for herself/himself	R	68	4.12	0.87
8. Provide teacher in-services for faith formation	R	68	3.81	1.14
12. Provide an environment where the Catholic faith can be practiced	R	68	4.74	0.51
14. Hire teachers who can support the religious mission of the school	RA	68	4.60	0.63
16. Lead the school community in prayer	R	68	3.84	0.99
18. Create an environment where students' moral development is fostered	R	68	4.84	0.37

Table 4 (Continued)

<u>Question</u>	<u>Subscale</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
23. Work collaboratively with parish staff	R	68	4.13	0.75
Principal as Religious Leader		68	4.31	0.54
3. Facilitate the process of the evaluation of curriculum	I	68	4.46	0.66
9. Provide a school environment where children are respectful	I	68	4.82	0.42
17. Show appreciation to staff	I	68	4.38	0.75
22. Review progress reports of students	I	68	3.43	1.11
24. Be able to mentor teachers	I	68	4.43	0.82
26. Conduct evaluations of staff	I	68	4.56	0.63
27. Show appreciation to students	I	68	4.53	0.68
31. Promote an academic learning environment	I	68	4.88	0.44
Principal as Instructional Leader		68	4.44	0.45
10. Delegate responsibilities	A	68	4.40	0.69
11. Respond appropriately to crises	A	68	4.88	0.32
14. Hire teachers who can support the religious mission of the school	RA	68	4.60	0.63
19. Participate in all school advisory council meetings	A	68	4.06	0.94

Table 4 (Continued)

<u>Question</u>	<u>Subscale</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
21. Provide in-service for the school advisory council	A	67	3.45	0.91
28. Work collaboratively with parents	A	68	4.65	0.51
29. Encourage continuing education for teachers	A	68	4.38	0.67
32. Have clear expectations for those with whom s/he works	A	68	4.75	0.47
33. Plan finances to obtain needed resources	A	68	4.35	0.89
34. Select and hire competent teachers	A	68	4.88	0.32
35. Know school law as it applies to Catholic schools	A	68	4.69	0.53
Principal as Administrative Leader		68	4.47	0.37
1. Be an effective communicator	C	67	4.96	0.21
4. Lead the school's public relations activities	C	68	3.68	0.84
15. Publish school handbooks	C	68	3.99	1.03
20. Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school	C	67	4.28	0.75
25. Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish	C	68	4.38	0.69

Note. Question 14 belongs in both the religious and administrative leader subscales.



Means of questions. The means of the individual questions for the parents' responses ranged from neutral, 3.36 ( $SD = 0.95$ ) on question 21 (provide in-service for the school advisory council), to important, 4.91 on both question 9 ( $SD = 0.28$ ) (provide a school environment where children are respectful) and question 34 ( $SD = 0.31$ ) (select and hire competent teachers) (see Table 5).

### Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference between teachers and parents in their perceptions of the most important behaviors of effective Catholic elementary school principals in the areas of leadership styles, religious leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator?

Comparison of means of subscales. The t-tests comparing the means of the subscales (principal as administrative leader, principal as instructional leader, principal as religious leader, and leadership styles) for the parents and teachers are shown in Table 6. Only the t-test for the principal as religious leader subscale was statistically significant. The teachers' mean score ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ) was significantly greater than the parents' mean score ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ),  $t(606) = 2.82$ ,  $p = .005$ .

Comparison of means of individual questions. The reliability estimate for the questions in the principal as communicator subscale was less than .70. Thus, separate t-tests were run on these questions (see Table 6). On question 15 (publish school handbooks) the teachers' mean score ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ) was significantly greater than the parents' mean score ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ),  $t(605) = 3.46$ ,  $p = .001$ .

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Parents' Responses

<u>Question</u>	<u>Subscale</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
5. Use problem-solving skills with staff	S	539	4.68	0.56
6. Encourage innovations in the school	S	536	4.42	0.67
13. Use appropriate strategies to support teachers on their performance	S	539	4.53	0.59
30. Promote school staff morale	S	538	4.65	0.57
Leadership Styles		540	4.57	0.43
2. Be a practicing Catholic (rather than just Christian)	R	540	4.13	0.99
7. Participate in spiritual growth activities for herself/himself	R	539	3.92	0.89
8. Provide teacher in-services for faith formation	R	538	3.63	0.98
12. Provide an environment where the Catholic faith can be practiced	R	538	4.54	0.70
14. Hire teachers who can support the religious mission of the school	RA	540	4.40	0.74
16. Lead the school community in prayer	R	540	3.53	1.01
18. Create an environment where students' moral development is fostered	R	540	4.79	0.46

Table 5 (Continued)

<u>Question</u>	<u>Subscale</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
23. Work collaboratively with parish staff	R	537	3.93	0.85
Principal as Religious Leader		540	4.11	0.55
3. Facilitate the process of the evaluation of curriculum	I	536	4.50	0.62
9. Provide a school environment where children are respectful	I	540	4.91	0.28
17. Show appreciation to staff	I	539	4.58	0.60
22. Review progress reports of students	I	538	3.59	0.97
24. Be able to mentor teachers	I	536	4.34	0.74
26. Conduct evaluations of staff	I	538	4.61	0.55
27. Show appreciation to students	I	537	4.47	0.71
31. Promote an academic learning environment	I	536	4.80	0.44
Principal as Instructional Leader		540	4.47	0.36
10. Delegate responsibilities	A	539	4.35	0.69
11. Respond appropriately to crises	A	540	4.84	0.40
14. Hire teachers who can support the religious mission of the school	RA	540	4.40	0.74
19. Participate in all school advisory council meetings	A	540	4.19	0.80

Table 5 (Continued)

<u>Question</u>	<u>Subscale</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
21. Provide in-service for the school advisory council	A	532	3.36	0.95
28. Work collaboratively with parents	A	537	4.61	0.57
29. Encourage continuing education for teachers	A	537	4.48	0.67
32. Have clear expectations for those with whom s/he works	A	538	4.72	0.50
33. Plan finances to obtain needed resources	A	537	4.29	0.77
34. Select and hire competent teachers	A	538	4.91	0.31
35. Know school law as it applies to Catholic schools	A	538	4.61	0.60
Principal as Administrative Leader		540	4.44	0.35
1. Be an effective communicator	C	539	4.90	0.34
4. Lead the school's public relations activities	C	540	3.74	0.92
15. Publish school handbooks	C	539	3.53	1.03
20. Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school	C	540	4.40	0.74
25. Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish	C	535	4.23	0.82

Note. Question 14 belongs in both the religious and administrative leader subscales.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-tests for Subscales

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Teacher</b>			<b>Parent</b>			<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p (2-tailed)</b>
	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b><u>M</u></b>	<b><u>SD</u></b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b><u>M</u></b>	<b><u>SD</u></b>			
Leadership Styles	68	4.59	0.47	540	4.57	0.43	1.53	606	.126
Religious	68	4.31	0.54	540	4.11	0.55	2.82	606	.005
Instructional	68	4.44	0.45	540	4.47	0.36	-0.80	606	.424
Administrator	68	4.47	0.37	540	4.44	0.35	0.73	606	.467
<b>Individual questions</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b><u>M</u></b>	<b><u>SD</u></b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b><u>M</u></b>	<b><u>SD</u></b>	<b><u>t</u></b>	<b><u>df</u></b>	<b><u>p (2-tailed)</u></b>
1. Be an effective communicator	67	4.96	0.21	539	4.90	0.34	1.32	604	.187
4. Lead the school's public relations activities	68	3.68	0.84	540	3.74	0.92	-0.52	606	.607
15. Publish school handbooks	68	3.99	1.03	539	3.53	1.03	3.46	605	.001
20. Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school	67	4.28	0.75	540	4.40	0.74	-1.23	605	.218

Table 6 (Continued)

Individual questions	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u> (2-tailed)
25. Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish	68	4.38	0.69	535	4.23	0.82	1.47	601	.144

Rank order of items. Table 7 shows a comparison of the rank order of the means of each item for parents and teachers. Parents and teachers agreed on seven of the behaviors as most important for an effective principal. These behaviors are select and hire competent teachers, provide an environment where children are respectful, be an effective communicator, respond appropriately to crisis, promote an academic learning environment, create an environment where students' moral development is fostered, and have clear expectations for those whom s/he works. Each subscale is represented at least once by these behaviors and they align with the behaviors from the review of the literature in Chapter 2 (see Table 2).

The teachers and parents also agreed on the six least important behaviors of an effective principal. These behaviors were provide in-services for the school advisory council, lead the school community in prayer, publish school handbooks, review progress reports of students, provide teacher in-services for faith formation, and lead the school's public relations activities.

### Summary

The results of this study clearly indicate that the teachers and parents are very similar in their perceptions of what behaviors an effective Catholic elementary school principal should exhibit. They agree that leadership skills are most important for principals and that the principal's religious leadership is less important for effectiveness. The results of the survey are discussed in Chapter 5 along with implications for research and practice.

Table 7

Comparison of Rank Order of Means of Items

Teachers' Response Mean				Parents' Response Mean		
Rank	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
1	Be an effective communicator	4.96	0.21	Select and hire competent teachers	4.91	0.31
2	Select and hire competent teachers	4.88	0.32	Provide a school environment where children are respectful	4.91	0.28
3	Respond appropriately to crises	4.88	0.32	Be an effective communicator	4.90	0.34
4	Promote an academic learning environment	4.88	0.44	Respond appropriately to crises	4.84	0.40
5	Create an environment where students' moral development is fostered	4.84	0.37	Promote an academic learning environment	4.80	0.44
6	Provide a school environment where children are respectful	4.82	0.42	Create an environment where students' moral development is fostered	4.79	0.46
7	Have clear expectations for those with whom s/he works	4.75	0.47	Have clear expectations for those with whom s/he works	4.72	0.50
8	Provide an environment where the Catholic faith can be practiced	4.74	0.51	Use problem-solving skills with staff	4.68	0.56



Table 7 (Continued)

Teachers' Response Mean				Parents' Response Mean		
Rank	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
9	Promote school staff morale	4.71	0.52	Promote school staff morale	4.65	0.57
10	Knows school law as it applies to Catholic schools	4.69	0.53	Work collaboratively with parents	4.61	0.57
11	Use appropriate strategies to support teachers on their performance	4.68	0.68	Know school law as it applies to Catholic schools	4.61	0.60
12	Work collaboratively with parents	4.65	0.51	Conduct evaluations of staff	4.61	0.55
13	Use problem solving skills with staff	4.62	0.55	Show appreciation to staff	4.58	0.60
14	Hire teachers who can support the religious mission of the school	4.60	0.63	Provide an environment where the Catholic faith can be practiced	4.54	0.70
15	Conduct evaluations of staff	4.56	0.63	Use appropriate strategies to support teachers on their performance	4.53	0.59
16	Show appreciation to students	4.53	0.68	Facilitate the process of the evaluation of curriculum	4.50	0.62
17	Facilitate the process of the evaluation of curriculum	4.46	0.66	Encourage continuing education for teachers	4.48	0.67

Table 7 (Continued)

Teachers' Response Mean				Parents' Response Mean		
Rank	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
18	Be able to mentor teachers	4.43	0.82	Show appreciation to students	4.47	0.71
19	Delegate responsibilities	4.40	0.69	Encourage innovations in the school	4.42	0.67
20	Be a practicing Catholic (rather than just Christian)	4.40	0.93	Hire teachers who can support the religious mission of the school	4.40	0.74
21	Show appreciation to staff	4.38	0.75	Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school	4.40	0.74
22	Encourage continuing education for teachers	4.38	0.67	Delegate responsibilities	4.35	0.69
23	Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish	4.38	0.69	Be able to mentor teachers	4.34	0.74
24	Encourage innovations in the school	4.35	0.75	Plan finances to obtain needed resources	4.29	0.77
25	Plan finances to obtain needed resources	4.35	0.89	Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish	4.23	0.82
26	Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school	4.28	0.75	Participate in all school advisory council meetings	4.19	0.80

Table 7 (Continued)

Teachers' Response Mean				Parents' Response Mean		
Rank	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Question	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
27	Work collaboratively with parish staff	4.13	0.75	Be a practicing Catholic (rather than just Christian)	4.13	0.99
28	Participate in spiritual growth activities for herself/himself	4.12	0.87	Work collaboratively with parish staff	3.93	0.85
29	Participate in all school advisory council meetings	4.06	0.94	Participate in spiritual growth activities for herself/himself	3.92	0.89
30	Publish school handbooks	3.99	1.03	Lead the school's public relations activities	3.74	0.92
31	Lead the school community in prayer	3.84	0.99	Provide teacher in-services for faith formation	3.63	0.98
32	Provide teacher in-services for faith formation	3.81	1.14	Review progress reports of students	3.59	0.97
33	Lead the school's public relations activities	3.68	0.84	Lead the school community in prayer	3.53	1.01
34	Provide in-service for the school advisory council	3.45	0.91	Publish school handbooks	3.53	1.03
35	Review progress reports of students	3.43	1.11	Provide in-service for the school advisory council	3.36	0.95

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

Leading a school is like a juggling act, where the principal must learn to balance an array of responsibilities, stresses, and conflicts. Strong leadership is a primary factor of effective schools, and the behavior of the principal is the driving force behind the other factors (Levine & Lezotte, 1990). This study considers the dimension of the spiritual leadership behaviors of principals and also the teachers' and parents' perceptions of important behaviors for a principal's effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to determine what parents and teachers perceive to be the most important behaviors for an effective Catholic elementary school principal and whether there were significant differences in their perceptions.

This chapter first discusses the similarities of the findings between the teachers' and parents' perceptions with suggestions as to why they were similar. Following that is a discussion of the differences of the perceptions between the two groups with some suggestions as to the why those differences exist. The implications for practice and for further research are discussed. The chapter ends with a conclusion that summarizes the researcher's beliefs about the results of the study.

#### Similar Findings of Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions

Subscales. As anticipated, all the subscales were ranked as important (4) by the teachers and parents, although some individual questions were ranked in the neutral (3) area. Both groups agreed that leadership skills were most important for Catholic elementary school principals to be effective. The four questions in the leadership styles

subscale relate directly to interactions with teachers (use problem-solving skills with staff, encourage innovations in the school, use appropriate strategies to support teachers on their performance, and promote staff morale). Levine and Lezotte (1990) note that key characteristics of effective principals are the tendency to spend much time and energy devoted to school improvement actions and to provide large amounts of support for their teachers. The authors state that providing incentives for teachers and students and providing superior instructional leadership are also behaviors of effective principals. The National Education Association's (1986) summary of important factors for effective principals determined that the success of a school depends on the ability of the principal to coordinate, organize, and support the staff in planning, implementing, and evaluating improvements to the school's instructional program. These findings are supported by B. J. Davis (1995) in her qualitative study of a principal with a reputation for effectiveness. She found that modeling, delegation, negotiation, accountability, flexibility, openness, being proactive, toughness, acknowledging, and celebrating were all put into practice by this principal. Based on the studies in the review of the literature, it makes sense that the leadership styles subscale would be ranked the highest in importance.

The questions in the leadership styles subscale could also relate to any workplace, and it is thought that parents recognized these behaviors as prerequisite to all others. At the least, the behaviors in this subscale are companion skills to other leadership skills that, when in place, make a principal more effective.

Given the priority the Church has placed on the importance of religious leadership in its schools, it is interesting to note that the principal as religious leader subscale ranked the lowest in terms of importance among the teachers and the parents. Statistics provided by the Archdiocesan schools office in January 2004 indicate that, of the 10 schools surveyed, 85% of the parents in those schools are Catholic and 90% of the teachers are Catholic. This may suggest that principals need to purposefully communicate and articulate the mission of the Catholic elementary school, which is faith formation, to their community on a regular basis. Or, perhaps, parents and teachers perceive that the teachers are most responsible for this as the first line educators for their children.

The principal as instructional leader subscale and principal as administrative leader subscale were almost identical in their means for both groups. The questions in these subscales pertain to the academic environment of the school as well as the day-to-day management of the affairs of the school. While many of these behaviors are not visible to parents, if these behaviors are lacking, the effects would be readily noticeable in the school.

Individual questions. The teachers and parents agreed on seven of the behaviors as most important for an effective principal among the individual questions. These behaviors are select and hire competent teachers, provide an environment where children are respectful, be an effective communicator, respond appropriately to crisis, promote an academic learning environment, create an environment where students' moral development is fostered, and have clear expectations for those with whom s/he

works. Each subscale is represented at least once by these behaviors, and they align with the behaviors from the review of the literature in Chapter 2 (see Table 2).

The teachers and parents also agreed on the six least important behaviors of an effective principal. These behaviors were provide in-services for the school advisory council, lead the school community in prayer, publish school handbooks, review progress reports of students, provide teacher in-services for faith formation, and lead the school's public relations activities. Leading the community in prayer and providing in-services for faith formation belong in the subscale of principal as religious leader. Therefore, the ranking of these behaviors is consistent with the subscale rankings. As a principal who reviews each progress report, it is surprising to me that this is not as important to teachers or parents. Both groups probably agreed on their perceptions of the importance of these behaviors believing that someone else could easily do them at the school (the pastor for some and the secretary for others).

When averaged together, being an effective communicator was clearly the leader with both groups. This question is more general than some of the other questions as effective communication can be defined in many ways. It is not known whether teachers were responding to this statement as being most important because it is lacking among their principals or because there are so many ways to communicate, they see a myriad of behaviors.

Clearly, parents and teachers generally have the same expectations of the Catholic elementary school principal. This is probably because the schools are a

ministry of the parish and the reasons parents place their students in the schools match the same reasons why teachers want to work in these schools.

#### Differences of Findings for Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions

Subscales. There was a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers and parents for behaviors in the subscale of principal as religious leader. Both groups ranked this subscale the lowest. However, the parents' mean of 4.11 ( $SD = 0.55$ ) was significantly lower than the teachers' mean, which was 4.31 ( $SD = 0.54$ ).

For some Catholic educators it may be disconcerting for this subscale to have the lowest mean among both groups. It suggests that, in the Archdiocese studied, and perhaps nationwide, there is a need to educate both teachers and parents on the fundamental purpose of the Catholic elementary school and the role the leadership of the school has in that purpose. The other subscales in this study showed no significant differences between the teachers and parents.

Individual questions. Of the individual questions that were compared there was a significant difference between the teachers' and parents' responses on question 15 (publish school handbooks). The teachers thought this behavior was more important with a mean of 3.99 ( $SD = 1.03$ ) than the parents whose mean was 3.53 ( $SD = 1.03$ ). Publishing school handbooks is a behavior that many parents probably believe another person on the school staff, for instance, the secretary, would do. However, teachers would be more familiar with the roles and duties of all school staff and also the importance of a well-written handbook. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume teachers would rank this behavior higher than the parents.



### Implications for Practice

If principals believe their primary role is that defined by the church as first and foremost a religious leader (Jacobs, 1997; Schuttloffel, 1999), then, based on this study, there is a need to communicate that to those involved in the schools. In the meantime, principals must still be accountable to their teachers and parents for the education of the children entrusted to their schools.

Both groups perceived that the leadership style subscale was the most important for effective behaviors. Principals need to ensure that they are using problem-solving skills with staff, encouraging innovations in the school, using appropriate strategies to support teachers on their performance, and promoting staff morale (Glickman et al., 2001; Hausman & Goldring, 1996; Krug, 1992).

Communication is important to both groups. Maintaining high visibility around the school and making many contacts with students and staff are ways to ensure the lines of communication are open (Hausman & Goldring, 1996). Defining the mission of the school, developing goals, and communicating those to all constituents are necessary for effective leadership (Glickman et al., 2001; Krug, 1992; Levine & Lezotte, 1990).

Implications for teachers. The teachers expect that the principal will exhibit the leadership styles needed for them to do their jobs effectively. For principals to be effective with their teachers, according to this study, they need to communicate with their teachers, support them in their work, and use problem-solving skills. Clearly, while teachers believe the academic and instructional leadership behaviors are

important for principals to exhibit, they want their own needs taken care of first.

Knowing how important teachers are to a child's success in school (Levine & Levine, 1996), principals need to be cognizant of their teachers needs, the relationships they are building with them, and the support they need to be successful in their jobs.

Implications for parents. The parents, too, perceive the leadership styles of the principal as most important for effectiveness. Although the questions in this subscale specifically addressed interactions with staff, parents seem to expect these behaviors should be extended to the principal's interactions with them.

Parents also perceive and believe the instructional and administrative aspects of the school are important to be in place in order for their children to receive the best education possible. Given the number of students graduating from Catholic elementary schools who go on to Catholic high schools, it is clear that parents have high academic expectations for their children. Principals need to ensure that their schools are striving for academic excellence through their instructional and administrative leadership.

Implications for Catholic Schools. Based on this survey, both groups perceive that a principal's leadership and personality are key to effectiveness. It is important that principals pay attention to their interactions with their staff, the parents, and the community and work collaboratively with these groups. Learning good problem-solving skills and applying them in these interactions were deemed important to both groups. Having a plan to recognize teachers' work and providing resources for them show that principals are supportive of their teachers. It is up to the principal to exhibit

strong leadership by cultivating a positive climate in the school, and being interested in and encouraging innovative ideas in the school.

At risk is the Catholic identity of our schools. With the principal as religious leader ranked lowest in importance for both teachers and parents, there is a concern that principals are not clearly articulating and communicating the primary reason for the Catholic School, which is to help build God's kingdom on earth through faith formation of the students (Jacobs, 1997). There is a need for principals to ensure that both teachers and parents embrace the mission of the Catholic School. In particular, parents must be educated for an understanding and a commitment to the vision of the school.

#### Implications for Research.

This study indicates that while teachers and parents hold similar perceptions about what makes a principal effective, there is a statistically significant difference in their beliefs about the religious leadership of an effective Catholic elementary school principal. What is not known is how long these perceptions have been in place and to what extent they drive the mission of the school. Several questions arise as a result. Do teachers and parents believe that one set of behaviors is more important than another? Is this true in other dioceses around the country or unique to the one studied? Has the rise in lay leadership affected the perceptions of these groups?

One suggested study would be to replicate this study in other dioceses with similar school demographics to validate and expand on the information in this study. A qualitative study comparing the behaviors of a religious principal (one who is a nun, priest, or brother) to a lay principal might give some insights into whether these

principals are perceived differently by teachers and parents and the impact those perceptions might have on the school and student learning. Another suggestion would be to replicate this study in a public school system to determine if the perceptions of teachers and parents are similar to those in the Catholic schools studied

Both groups believe that leadership styles are most important. How do those styles reflect the religious leadership of the principal? Are the Catholic ideals so much a part of the culture of the school that they are not easily separated? Principals were not surveyed for this study, so it is not known if their perceptions would match the teachers' and parents'. A suggestion for further study would be to measure principals' perceptions on effective behavior and compare those responses to the parents' and teachers' responses.

Both groups ranked the religious leader subscale as lowest in importance. Again, this raises several questions. Are Catholic school principals trained sufficiently for their role in these schools? Is the mission of the schools clearly articulated, and is this mission being communicated to those involved with the schools? Are the academic and disciplinary expectations in Catholic elementary schools taking precedence over the fundamental reason for the school or are they a result of this fundamental reason for existence? Although it was clearly stated on the survey that this was not an evaluation of their principal, one wonders if the rankings given by the teachers and parents reflect the areas in which their principals are the strongest. Suggestions for further research would be to conduct a qualitative study involving a few principals, including both religious and lay leaders, male and female. An in-depth study of the principals' training

in religious instruction, the process they use to solve problems and their interactions with parents, coupled with a measure of the Catholic identity of the school would help answer some of these questions. A closer study of why teachers and parents do not seem to value the religious leadership as much as the other subscales could lead to some insights as to why they have this perception.

### Conclusion

With the diminishing number of nuns, priests, and brothers in the Catholic schools, the Catholic identity of schools can no longer be assumed. While a principal has many duties and responsibilities, the Church makes it clear that the religious leadership of the Catholic school must remain a priority. This study, though limited to 10 schools in one Archdiocese, points out the need to address this issue of the principal's role. Catholic schools have always been recognized for their high academic and disciplinary standards, but the fundamental reason for the school's existence is faith formation of children (Jacobs, 1997). Catholic schools are considered ministries of the church and this must not be lost in the age of standards and performance expectations. At the same time, these schools cannot survive without sufficient enrollment and funding. If parents perceive that their children's needs and their own expectations are not being met, they have the option of choosing another school for their children. One can theorize that, if Catholic schools hire principals who meet the leadership expectations of the teachers and the parents, those principals, if properly trained, should be able to articulate and disseminate the mission of the school and educate the community on the role of the school according to the Catholic Church.

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Appendix A,  
Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon  
Principal Job Description

### ***Role of School Principal***

The principal ensures the effective operation of a Catholic education program by providing leadership in curriculum development and programming, financial and personnel management, student/teacher/program evaluations, public relations and planning, facility maintenance and development.

The four roles of the principal (as Religious Leader, as Instructional Leader, as Administrator, and as Communicator) provide the basis for the Principal Performance Plan, which is written at the beginning of each year, and for the pastor's evaluation of the principal.

#### **Principal as Religious Leader**

The principal:

Is committed to the Lord Jesus as a believing and practicing Catholic;

Is prayerful, faith-filled and committed to spiritual growth;

Is loyal to the Church and accepts its authentic teaching;

Creates an environment where the process of faith and moral development can be applied;

Knows and applies Church documents and other religious resources that relate to schools;

Provides opportunities that foster the spiritual growth of faculty, students, and other members of the school community;

Leads the school community in prayer;

Links the school and the local school community;

Integrates gospel values and Christian social principles into the curriculum and the life of the school;

Articulates the Catholic educational vision and directs its accomplishments;

Recognizes and provides for cultural and religious differences within the entire school community;

Maintains the school as a mission of the parish;

Works with staff and priests to ensure that this mission is understood and implemented at all grade levels;

### **Principal as Instructional Leader**

The principal:

Is committed to the philosophy of Catholic education that underlies Catholic schools;

Promotes staff morale and a sense of Christian community among teachers;

Provides leadership for professional growth and staff development, including the assessment of educational trends;

Shapes, shares, and implements a school philosophy which reflects the unique Catholic character of the school;

Provides leadership in the development and direction of an instructional program designed to achieve Archdiocesan and parish objectives;

Implements Archdiocesan and school advisory council policies;

Models life-long learning by possessing an advanced degree and updates his/her knowledge;



Shows a general variety of educational pedagogical skills;  
 Initiates and conducts evaluations of students, staff, and innovative programs;  
 Provides effective instructional leadership and supervision of staff and provides programs that reflect the unique Catholic nature of the school.

### **Principal as Administrator**

The principal:

Demonstrates good process in decision making;  
 Is responsible for the complete operation of the school, including all its approved functions and services;  
 Provides for crisis intervention plans;  
 Assures effective and relevant use of personnel resources and physical plant;  
 Is accountable and has high expectations for those with whom s/he works;  
 Supervises the volunteer program;  
 Assures participation in federal programs within the school, if desired;  
 Works collaboratively with faculty, staff and parents;  
 Works collaboratively with a variety of parish and/or diocesan groups, especially governance groups;  
 Plans and manages the school's financial resources;  
 Is sensitive to the demands of justice in making financial decisions, especially as they relate to the Church's social teachings;  
 Provides leadership for long range planning and development activities;  
 Provides leadership for the school's public and community relations activities;

Provides an orderly school environment that promotes student self-discipline consistent with Gospel values and Christian principles;

Knows current school law as it applies to the Catholic school;

Represents and supports Archdiocesan norms and policies;

Serves as executive officer to the school advisory council and participates in meetings. The principal will implement policies of the school advisory council and provides for council in-service.

#### **Principal as Communicator**

The principal:

Articulates Catholic Christian values;

Articulates educational values;

Knows and can apply appropriate group dynamics, conflict management, problem solving, and other organizational development skills;

Knows how to delegate responsibilities appropriately and does so;

Knows how to relate the service dimension of the school to the civic community;

Ensures the publication of appropriate handbooks;

Provides regular updates for parents;

Provides opportunities for faculty and staff to interact with religious education staff;

Develops and maintains a warm atmosphere in the school.

## Appendix B

### Content Validity Process

## BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS CONTENT VALIDITY PROCEDURES

For this part of my study, *A Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers and Parents of Behaviors of Effective Catholic Elementary School Principals*, I want to ensure that the survey items are appropriate for measuring behaviors of effective Catholic Elementary School principals. I am asking a panel of Catholic School administrators, a panel of Catholic Elementary School teachers, and a panel of Catholic Elementary School parents to rate the appropriateness of the items in determining the behaviors of effective Catholic Elementary School principals.

### CATEGORIES

**LEADERSHIP STYLES-** The different ways in which a principal interacts with the staff of the school, the parents and other members of the school community. Some examples are consultative, participative, democratic, innovative, and supportive.

**PRINCIPAL AS RELIGIOUS LEADER-** The behaviors of the principal pertaining to the Catholic identity of the school such as modeling Christian values, highlighting the religious education program, developing the Catholic culture, and managing the values of the school.

**PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER-** The behaviors of the principal pertaining to the educational aspects of the school including managing curriculum and instruction, monitoring student progress, supervising teachers and staff, and setting instructional strategies.

**PRINCIPAL AS ADMINISTRATOR-** The behaviors of the principal pertaining to the management of the school including obtaining and managing resources, cultivating the climate and culture, working with members of the school community, and hiring qualified staff and faculty.

**PRINCIPAL AS COMMUNICATOR-** The behaviors of the principal pertaining to defining and disseminating the philosophy and mission of the school, communicating goals to the school community and building coalitions to help meet those goals.

Please circle your correct position

Position: Administrator or Teacher or Parent

## BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Please use the following scale to rate the appropriateness of each statement in assessing behaviors of effective Catholic Elementary School principals. If possible, please provide ways to improve items that you rate "1" or "2".

1 = Not Appropriate  
2 = Marginally Appropriate  
3 = Very Appropriate

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### LEADERSHIP STYLES

To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:

1. Use problem-solving skills with staff	1	2	3
			24
2. Encourage innovations in the school	1	2	3
Encourage in what area?		4	20
3. Be highly supportive of teachers	1	2	3
Not clear		4	20
4. Work collaboratively with parish staff	1	2	3
		5	19
5. Promote staff morale	1	2	3
Add in school staff**		5	19
Change the word promote			

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## PRINCIPAL AS RELIGIOUS LEADER

To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:

6. Be a practicing Catholic	1	2	3
Many replaced Catholic with Christian. I want the distinction made.		7	17
7. Participate in spiritual growth activities for herself/himself	1	2	3
This is personal but important, would parents/teachers be aware of this? Not clear		6	18
8. Provide teacher in-services for faith formation	1	2	3
No comments	2	2	20
9. Provide an environment where the Catholic faith can be practiced	1	2	3
Isn't that a given? What exactly are you looking for?	1	2	21
10. Hire teachers who can contribute to the religious mission of the school	1	2	3
Change can contribute to "support".*****	1	9	14
11. Lead the school community in prayer	1	2	3
Not sure this would always assist in being an effective principal. At events. Or encourage or make opportunities for school to be led in prayer-encourage other to lead (then change my 2 to 3)	1	11	12
12. Create an environment where moral development is emphasized	1	2	3
1-Change moral to spiritual. Add in student moral development and change emphasized to fostered. 2-Should school even be doing this, isn't this the home's responsibility?	1	2	21

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## PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:

13. Facilitate the evaluation of the curriculum	1	2	3
Reword to say Facilitate the process of the evaluation of the curriculum			24
14. Provide for a school environment where children are respectful	1	2	3
1-Not clear	1		23
15. Show appreciation to staff	1	2	3
		5	19
16. Review progress reports of students	1	2	3
	1	7	16

17. Be able to teach teachers	1	2	3
Change word "teach" to "mentor", then it is ok.****		7	14
18. Conduct evaluations of staff	1	2	3
Two teachers added in "Provide opportunity for teachers to evaluate principal" I don't want to add this because it is not a behavior of the principal		1	23
19. Show appreciation to students	1	2	3
		5	19
20. Promote an academic learning environment	1	2	3
			24

---

## PRINCIPAL AS ADMINISTRATOR

**To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:**

21. Delegate responsibilities	1	2	3
		4	20
22. Respond calmly to crises	1	2	3
Change "calmly" to "appropriately" and then OK	1	1	22
23. Participate in all school advisory council meetings	1	2	3
		2	22
24. Provide in-service for the school advisory council	1	2	3
1-"Doesn't the superintendent do this?"	1	10	13
25. Work collaboratively with parents	1	2	3
		5	19
26. Encourage continuing education for teachers	1	2	3
Change "encourage" to "provide" or even "provide finances".	1		23
27. Have clear expectations for those with whom s/he works	1	2	3
1-what does this mean?	1		23
28. Plan finances to obtain needed resources	1	2	3
1-wants added "in order to be fiscally responsible"	1	2	22

29. Select and hire competent teachers	1	2	3 24
30. Know school law as it applies to Catholic schools	1	2 5	3 19

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One teacher added in "Plan and run effective faculty meetings" Good question for faculty, but parents probably wouldn't care??

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## PRINCIPAL AS COMMUNICATOR

**To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:**

31. Be a good communicator Change "good" to "effective", then OK	1	2 1	3 23
32. Lead the school's public relations activities "Not if a volunteer is better". "Or delegate". "Should have help from a development director on this".	1	2 11	3 13
33. Publish appropriate handbooks Awkward phrasing. "Delegate". Change "appropriate" to "school", then OK	1	2 9	3 15
34. Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school	1	2 2	3 22
35. Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish "How?"	1	2 3	3 21



## Appendix C

### Survey Questionnaire

## **A Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers and Parents of Behaviors of Effective Catholic Elementary School Principals**

Dear Respondents:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Administration Program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and would appreciate your participation in a study I am conducting. While I have permission from the Department of Catholic Schools to distribute this survey, you are not required to complete it. It is entirely your choice.

My study on *A Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers and Parents of Behaviors of Effective Catholic Elementary School Principals* is attempting to determine the behaviors that you believe are most important for a principal to exhibit in order to be most effective in his/her job. Please keep in mind that this is **NOT AN EVALUATION OF YOUR SCHOOL'S PRINCIPAL**, but rather what you perceive the behaviors of a highly effective Catholic elementary principal to be. Results will be available for the 10 participating schools at the conclusion of the study.

Because I am also the principal at Holy Trinity Parish School in Beaverton, I do not want to create any unnecessary comparisons between my school and others in the Archdiocese of Portland. As a result, Holy Trinity will NOT be participating in the study.

After completing the survey, please enclose it in the attached envelope and return it, either to your school's office, or directly to me, which will ensure confidentiality. Thank you for helping me with my efforts to complete my doctorate.

Diane M. Cronin

Doctoral Candidate and Principal of Holy Trinity Parish School, Beaverton

**The following are statements reflecting some behaviors of principals.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Please mark the appropriate line indicating whether you are a teacher or a parent at this school.

Your school name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the number that most appropriately reflects your belief of the importance of that behavior for an effective principal to exhibit.

Please respond to every item. The number 5 means you believe this is a highly important behavior for a Catholic elementary principal to exhibit. The number 1 means you believe the behavior is not important for effectiveness. The 3 means you are neutral. You may circle any number on the continuum you feel reflects your belief on the importance of this behavior for effectiveness.

<b><u>To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:</u></b>	<b><u>Highly Important</u></b>	<b><u>Important</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat Important</u></b>	<b><u>Not Important</u></b>
1. Be an effective communicator	5	4	3	2	1
2. Be a practicing Catholic (rather than just Christian)	5	4	3	2	1
3. Facilitate the process of the evaluation of the curriculum	5	4	3	2	1
4. Lead the school's public relations activities	5	4	3	2	1
5. Use problem-solving skills with staff	5	4	3	2	1
6. Encourage innovations in the school	5	4	3	2	1

<b>To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:</b>	<b>Highly Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
7. Participate in spiritual growth activities for herself/himself	5	4	3	2	1
8. Provide teacher in-services for faith formation	5	4	3	2	1
9. Provide a school environment where children are respectful	5	4	3	2	1
10. Delegate responsibilities	5	4	3	2	1
11. Respond appropriately to crises	5	4	3	2	1
12. Provide an environment where the Catholic faith can be practiced	5	4	3	2	1
13. Use appropriate strategies to support teachers on their performance	5	4	3	2	1
14. Hire teachers who can support the religious mission of the school	5	4	3	2	1
15. Publish school handbooks	5	4	3	2	1
16. Lead the school community in prayer	5	4	3	2	1

<b>To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:</b>	<b><u>Highly Important</u></b>	<b><u>Important</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat Important</u></b>	<b><u>Not Important</u></b>
17. Show appreciation to staff	5	4	3	2	1
18. Create an environment where students' moral development is fostered	5	4	3	2	1
19. Participate in all school advisory council meetings	5	4	3	2	1
20. Provide regular updates for parents on activities in the school	5	4	3	2	1
21. Provide in-service for the school advisory council	5	4	3	2	1
22. Review progress reports of students	5	4	3	2	1
23. Work collaboratively with parish staff	5	4	3	2	1
24. Be able to mentor teachers	5	4	3	2	1
25. Articulate the philosophy of the school as a mission of the parish	5	4	3	2	1
26. Conduct evaluations of staff	5	4	3	2	1
27. Show appreciation to students	5	4	3	2	1

<b>To be most effective in his or her job the principal should:</b>	<b>Highly Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
28. Work collaboratively with parents	5	4	3	2	1
29. Encourage continuing education for teachers	5	4	3	2	1
30. Promote school staff morale	5	4	3	2	1
31. Promote an academic learning environment	5	4	3	2	1
32. Have clear expectations for those with whom s/he works	5	4	3	2	1
33. Plan finances to obtain needed resources	5	4	3	2	1
34. Select and hire competent teachers	5	4	3	2	1
35. Know school law as it applies to Catholic schools	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix D  
IRB Authorization Letter



NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)

December 3, 2003

Diane Cronin  
12384 SW Canvasback Way  
Beaverton, OR 97007

IRB#: 430-03-EX

**TITLE OF PROTOCOL:** A Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers and Parents of Behaviors of Effective Catholic Elementary School Principals

Dear Ms. Cronin:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Form for the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46.101b, category 2. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Please be advised that the IRB has a maximum protocol approval period of three years from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond the three year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an active approval status.

Sincerely,

*Ernest Prentice, PhD/gdk*

Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.  
Co-Chair, IRB

EDP/gdk

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